BRITISH COLUMBIA

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highlights

a weekly digest of recently released British Columbia statistics

Population

- **A total of 10,055 immigrants landed in BC during the three-month period ending in September, 5.4% more than in the same period last year.** Almost a fifth (19%) of the immigrants coming to Canada were headed for BC. The province was the second-most popular destination for new immigrants in the country, after Ontario, the intended destination of more than half (56%) of the immigrants *Source: BC STATS*
- **Vancouver continued to be the main draw for immigrants coming to BC.** Eight in ten (7,919) of the 10,055 immigrants who landed in BC during the third quarter intended to settle in the lower mainland area. For immigrants from Mainland China, Taiwan and South America, the percentage was even higher, at about 90%. Most (69%) of the people coming to the province were economic immigrants (independent immigrants, entrepreneurs, investors, or self-employed). Of the remaining 31%, the majority (25%) came to Canada as part of the family reunification program, while 6% were refugees. BC received proportionally fewer refugees than other parts of the country. Eleven percent of all immigrants to Canada in the third quarter were refugees. *Source: BC STATS*

The Economy

- **The number of regular employment insurance (EI) recipients in British Columbia edged down 0.1% (seasonally adjusted) in September, falling to 60,720.** BC was one of eight regions where the number of recipients fell in that month. However, there were 4.7% more beneficiaries in Ontario and as a result, the Canadian figure was up 0.3%, to 511,220. *Source: Statistics Canada*

Charitable donations

- **Just under a quarter (640,500) of the 2.7 million people in British Columbia who filed income tax returns in 1998 reported that they had made charitable contributions.** Half of them had donated less than $200, while the other half indicated contributions in excess of this amount. The median donation for all Canadians was $170. Among the regions, median donations were highest in PEI ($280) and lowest in Quebec ($100). During the 1990s, Quebecers have consistently been at the low end of the scale, while median contributions made by residents of Newfoundland and PEI have been the highest in the country. *Source: Statistics Canada*
- **As a percent of all taxfilers, the number of people reporting charitable contributions on their tax returns is declining**. At the beginning of the decade, nearly 28% of British Columbians reported some donations on their tax forms. By 1997, the share had fallen to 20%, giving BC one of the lowest participation rates in the country. Last year, more residents of the province loosened their purse strings, with 24% reporting that they had made a donation to a charity.

  Despite a participation rate that has been consistently below the national average (which was 26% in 1998), those British Columbians who made contributions to charities were more generous than the typical Canadian. The average donation in BC was $1,057, more than in any other province except Alberta ($1,062). The Canadian average was $860, and in other regions, average donations ranged from $424 in Quebec to $1,010 in Ontario. *Source: Statistics Canada*

Report **High tech jobs in the low tech sector?**

Did you know...

In 1997, Canada was the ninth most popular tourist destination in the world, attracting 17.6 million overnight visitors from other countries. France (66.9 million), the US (48.4 million) and Spain (43.4 million) were the top three destinations. Despite its second place ranking, the US raked in more than twice as many international tourism dollars ($75 billion in US funds) as any other country. France ($28 billion) was a distant third, after Italy ($30 billion). Canada's earnings were $9 billion.

Investment income

- **Thirty-nine percent (1.1 million) of British Columbia taxfilers reported interest or dividend income on their tax returns in 1998.** This was more than in any other province except Saskatchewan (where 41% of taxfilers had investment income) and Manitoba (also at 39%). The Canadian average was 36%. Nunavut (9%) was the region with the lowest number of taxfilers reporting either interest or dividend income in 1998. *Source: Statistics Canada*

Agriculture

- **Farm cash receipts in British Columbia reached $1.4 billion during the first nine months of the year, an increase of 3.3% over the same period of 1998.** This was mainly due to a 7.3% rise in receipts from crop farming operations, which were boosted by higher sales of apples and tree fruits, as well as ongoing gains in the value of berries, grapes, and floriculture and nursery products sold by BC farmers. However, livestock receipts were weak, rising only 0.3% in the first nine months of the year.

  BC bucked a national trend that saw farm cash receipts rise 0.7% on the strength of increased livestock revenues (+1.1%) and program payments (+54.5%), which were at a five-year high. This helped offset a 3.9% drop in crop revenues as sales of wheat fell 10.4%, and other grain and cereal sales plunged between 20 and 30 percent in many cases. Higher receipts from other crops (+8.9%) were not strong enough to offset the collapse in the grain farming sector.

  Source: Statistics Canada

- **On a seasonally adjusted basis, exports of BC products fell 0.4% between August and September.** September's decline followed a 0.3% drop in the previous month. Shipments to the United States were down for the second month in a row, falling 2.0%. A 5.1% drop in forest product exports was the main reason for the weaker sales to the US. In addition, exports of agriculture and fish products dropped 9.8% after surging ahead 24.1% in the previous month.

  While exports to the US slowed down in September, shipments to other countries picked up speed, rising for the fourth time in the last five months. In direct contrast to the situation with US exports, the increase in overseas-destined exports (+3.4%) was largely due to a continued improvement in shipments of forest products (+5.8%). *Source: BC STATS*

Tourism

- **Room revenue in the province fell 3.7% (seasonally adjusted), to $107.1 million in August.** Room revenue has been trending down since peaking at $116.9 million in February, and the decline was the fifth in the last six months. Northeast (+6.5%), Kootenay (+2.3%) and Nechako (+1.1%) were the only regions where revenue was on the upswing in August. North Coast (-1.6%), Vancouver Island/Coast (-2.2%) and Thompson/Okanagan (-3.8%) posted modest declines. Mainland/Southwest (-4.1%) properties continued to struggle, posting the fourth decline in five months. Cariboo's 16.7% decline nearly offset an 11.3% increase in the previous month. *Source: BC STATS*

The Nation

- **Canada's composite leading indicator continued to grow at a steady rate in September, increasing 0.5% (seasonally adjusted) above the August level.** Eight of the ten index components advanced in September. Demand for durable goods continued to strengthen. Sales of furniture and appliances were up 1.0%, while other durable goods sales rose 0.7%. Manufacturers of durable goods saw new orders advance 0.9%. Most other components of the index showed more moderate growth. The housing index (-0.2%) and employment in the business and personal services sector (-0.4%) were the only components that weakened in September. *Source: Statistics Canada*

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Infoline Report: High Tech Jobs in the Low Tech Sector?

Contact: Steve Miller / (250) 387-0365

Originally published in October 1999 issue, *Business Indicators*. Annual subscription: $60 + GST

Highlights

- There are more high tech jobs in the "low tech" sector than in the "high tech" sector.
- High tech jobs make up only 3% of all jobs in the "low tech" sector.
- Most high tech jobs in all sectors are services related.

Introduction

The August edition of Business Indicators looked at the actual number of high tech jobs that exist in the "high tech sector". [1] The data revealed that over half the employment in the high technology sector involves occupations requiring a scientific or technical knowledge base. Considering all the support work that must be done to maintain any economic enterprise, this proportion could be considered quite high. It would be fair then to identify the high tech sector as a substantial and effective producer of high tech jobs.

This edition looks at the rest of the story, by examining high tech jobs that may exist in the "low tech" sector. The term "low tech" can be misleading. In fact, for a firm to be in this category only means that it is not in an industry that has received the "high tech" designation. Individual firms in such industries can be highly innovative and may use very advanced processes or deliver complex services. Further, it is clear that technology has diffused throughout the entire economy, and that even average firms may employ individuals with advanced skills.

[1] *BC Stats uses a definition of the high technology sector that includes a selection of industries that stress research and development, that employ scientists and technicians, or that produce or use sophisticated products. The annual report* "Profile of the British Columbia High Technology Sector" (available at the BC Stats web site) *provides measures of GDP, revenue, employment, wages and salaries, etc., for these industries.*

Four Industry/Occupation Blocks

In 1996, the latest year for which detailed occupational information is available, the Census indicated that there were nearly 1.7 million workers employed in BC. These workers were found in the high tech sector (that is, in high tech industries) and in the non-high tech sector, and were in high technology occupations (those requiring a scientific or technical knowledge base) and non-high technology occupations. This produces four possibilities, as illustrated in figure 1.

Although the high technology sector uses a much higher concentration of workers with high technology occupations than non-high technology sectors, there are actually more workers with high technology occupations outside of the high technology sector. This is because the number of non-high technology sectors is large enough to more than compensate for their sparing use of workers with high technology occupations.

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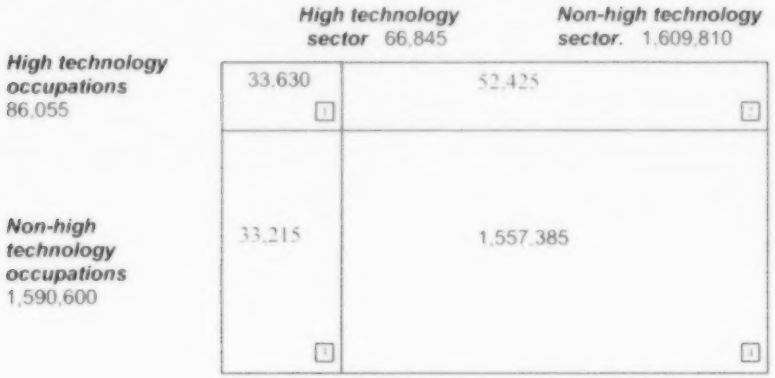
Figure 1. BC employment distribution by industry and occupation, 1996



(Diagram not to scale)

Employment in the non-High Technology Sector

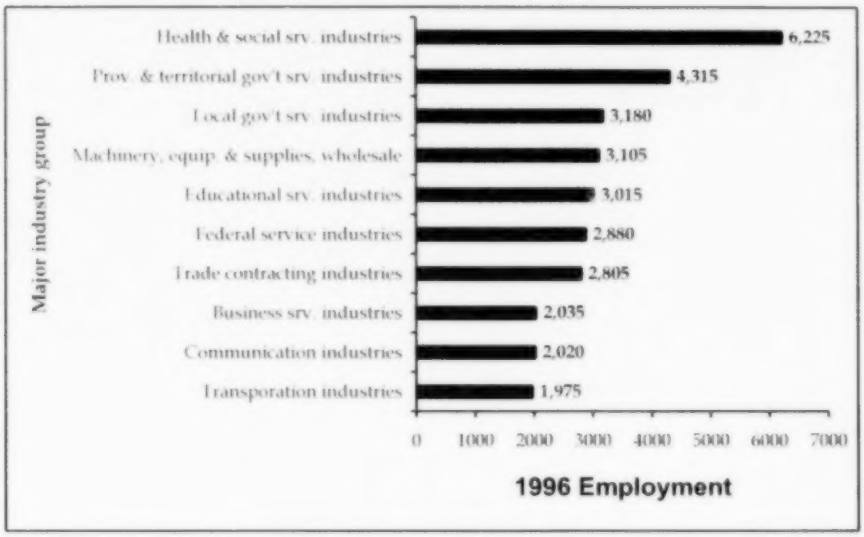
Block 2 in figure 1 above represents workers with high technology occupations outside of the high technology sector

Just over sixty per cent of workers with high technology occupations work in industries outside of the high technology sector. Although there are more workers with high technology occupations outside of the high technology sector than inside, their percentage of the workforce is much smaller outside. In the high technology sector, roughly half of the workers have high technology occupations. In the non-high technology sector, only three per cent of workers have high technology occupations. The reason there are more workers with high technology occupations outside of the high technology sector is simply that the rest of the economy is so much bigger, that even its sparing use of high technology workers adds up to more than the total in the high technology sector.

Figure 2 shows that the largest industry employer in block 2 is *Health & Social Services Industries*. Two thirds of these jobs are in medical technology jobs ranging from *Medical Laboratory Technicians* to *Respiratory Therapists & Clinical Perfusionists*. These high technology occupations are classified as high technology because they use high technology equipment that requires scientific understanding to operate.

The rest of the industries listed in Figure 2 fall into two broad categories. All three levels of government, federal, provincial, and local are on the list. Governments need technology specialists to help deliver its services and carry out research. The rest of the industries on the list are industries that use high levels of mechanization or automation. The *Communications Industry*, for example, relies on sophisticated equipment to transmit information quickly and accurately. Specialists are needed to ensure that these systems are set up properly and run smoothly.

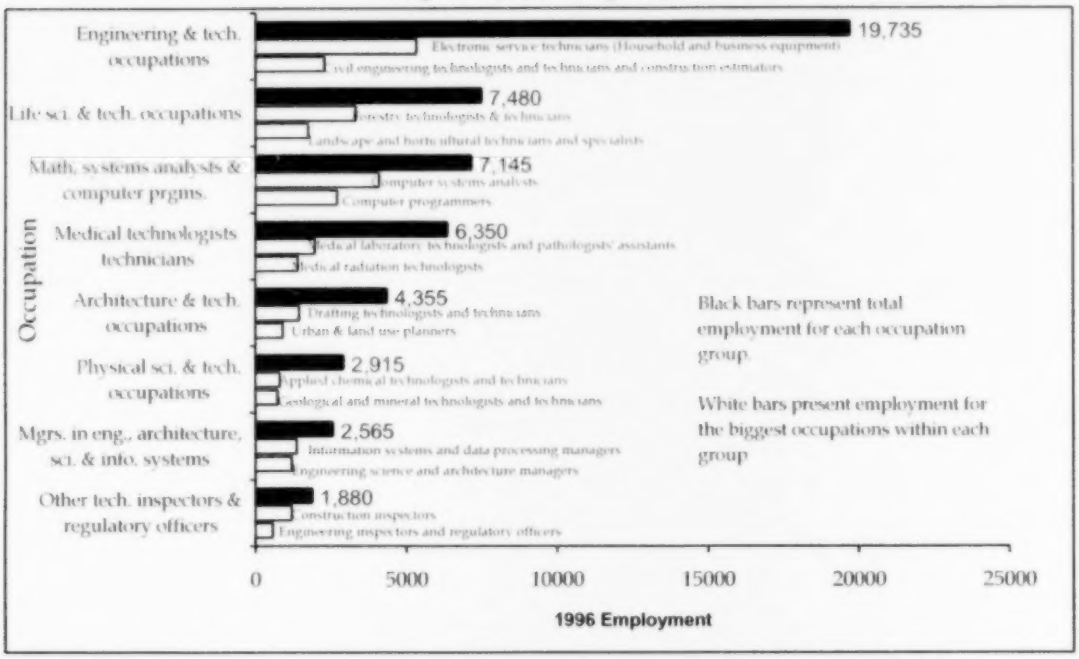
Figure 2. Top 10 non-high technology employers of high technology workers



The occupations in block 2 are usually focused on implementing technology as opposed to developing it. Figure 3 shows that *Engineering & Technical Occupations* is again the largest category of high technology occupations. However, the technical occupations are most important within this class. The top two occupations in this group within block 2 are *Electronic Service Technicians (Household And Business Equipment)* and *Civil Engineering Technologists and Technicians and Construction Estimators*.

The next biggest high technology occupation group in block 2 is *Life Science & Technical Occupations*. Looking at the occupations in this group shows that the workers are involved with the forestry industry and other outdoor work. This reflects the prominence of forestry in the BC economy.

Figure 3. Distribution of high technology workers outside the high technology sector, by major occupation groups



Conclusions

The dispersion of high technology occupations through the economy implies that policies that affect such workers or their companies should not be limited to the high technology sector. However, the spread of occupations requiring technical training, outside the high technology sector still accounts for only a small percentage of BC employment. And such occupations are primarily concerned with the use of technology, rather than its creation. The high technology sector designation therefore remains significant for understanding employment and innovation in the economy.

More Information is available

This report was adapted from the larger paper: *"High Technology Occupations in British Columbia, 1996"*. That paper extends the analysis to each of the four industry/occupation blocks described above. In addition, it reports on wage rates for both high technology and non-high technology occupations, both within and outside the high technology sector. *"High Technology Occupations in British Columbia, 1996"* can be obtained from the BC Stats web site in the subject area Business/High Technology.

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Infoline

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BC at a glance . . .

POPULATION (thousands)	Jul 1/99	% change on one year ago
BC	4,029.3	0.7
Canada	30,568.0	0.9
GDP and INCOME		% change on
(BC - at market prices)	1998	one year ago
Gross Domestic Product (GDP) *($ millions)*	110,948	-0.2
GDP *($ 1992 millions)*	99,708	0.2
GDP *($ 1992 per Capita)*	24,908	-0.8
Personal Disposable Income *($ 1992 per Capita)*	15,969	-1.6
TRADE ($ millions)		
Manufacturing Shipments (seas. adj.) Sep	3,220	11.6
Merchandise Exports (raw) Sep	2,483	5.8
Retail Sales (seasonally adjusted) Sep	2,846	4.4
CONSUMER PRICE INDEX		% change on
(all items - 1992=100)	Oct '99	one year ago
BC	111.8	1.5
Canada	111.5	2.3
LABOUR FORCE (thousands)		% change on
(seasonally adjusted)	Oct '99	one year ago
Labour Force - BC	2,049	0.1
Employed - BC	1,897	0.7
Unemployed - BC	152	-6.5
		Oct '98
Unemployment Rate - BC *(percent)*	7.4	8.0
Unemployment Rate - Canada *(percent)*	7.2	8.0
INTEREST RATES (percent)	Nov 24/99	Nov 25/98
Prime Business Rate	6.50	6.75
Conventional Mortgages - 1 year	7.35	6.40
- 5 year	8.25	7.15
US/CANADA EXCHANGE RATE	Nov 24/99	Nov 25/98
(avg. noon spot rate) Cdn $	1.4687	1.5445
US $ *(reciprocal of the closing rate)*	0.6820	0.6498
AVERAGE WEEKLY WAGE RATE		% change on
(industrial aggregate - dollars)	Oct '99	one year ago
BC	638.22	1.3
Canada	602.79	2.8

SOURCES:

Population, Gross Domestic Product, Trade, Prices, Labour Force, Wage Rate } Statistics Canada

Interest Rates, Exchange Rates: Bank of Canada Weekly Financial Statistics

For latest Weekly Financial Statistics see www.bank-banque-canada.ca/english/wfsgen.htm

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